

## Message Text

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14

ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 MC-02 EB-07 IGA-02 SAM-01 SAB-01 IO-10

/093 W

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R 220542Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4322

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USINT BAGHDAD

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER//ECJ 4/7/ECJ-2//

SECDEF WASHDC//ISA//

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 5338

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: MASS, KU

SUBJ: KUWAITI ARMS PURCHASES AND MILITARY MODERNIZATION

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SUMMARY: FROM RECENT STATEMENTS OF DEFENSE MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER IT APPEARS GOK HAS DECIDED TO DIVERSIFY EVEN MORE WIDELY ITS SOURCES OF MILITARY SUPPLY AND MILITARY ADVISORY ASSISTANCE. SUPPLIES WILL SPAN THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM AND EMPHASIS ON ADVISORS MAY BE GIVEN TO THIRD-WORLD NATIONALS. KUWAIT MAY ALSO SOON PARTICIPATE IN JOINT ARMAMENTS PROJECTS. IF ALL THIS HAPPENS, PROGNOSIS IS FOR A CONFUSED AND MILITARILY INEFFECTIVE DEFENSE FORCE.  
END SUMMARY.

1. IN THE COURSE OF THE PAST TWO - THREE MONTHS, DURING WHICH TIME DEFENSE MINISTER SHAYKH SA'D AL-ABDALLAH HAS VISITED UK, PAKISTAN, YUGOSLAVIA AND ITALY; AND FOREIGN MINISTER SHAYKH SABAH AL-AHMAD SPOKE ABOUT ARMS IN MOSCOW AND TRIPOLI, MUCH HAS BEEN AIRED PUBLICLY HERE ABOUT THE OVERALL KUWAITI ARMS ACQUISITION/MODERNIZATION PROGRAM. IN ADDITION, KUWAIT WAS VISITED BY AN INDIAN AIRCRAFT CARRIER, WITH THREE DESTROYERS, A CEREMONIAL TYPE OF AFFAIR, BUT ONE WHICH DOUBTLESS SUPPORTED THE EFFORTS THE INDIAN AMBASSADOR HERE IS MAKING TO GET INTO THE ACT (INDIA FIRST REPORTEDLY HOPED TO SELL SOME OF ITS INDIGENOUSLY-PRODUCED TANKS, BUT WITH BRITISH ON INSIDE TRACK NOW, INDIANS ARE SUPPOSEDLY TRYING FOR SPARE PARTS CONTRACT FOR TANKS). DEPUTY CHIEF OF FRENCH ARMED FORCES FOR AVIATION AFFAIRS ALSO JUST CONCLUDED A VISIT TO KUWAIT DURING WHICH MIRAGE TRAINING AND OTHER MILITARY TECHNICAL COOPERATION WAS DISCUSSED.

2. WE UNDERSTAND THAT ARTICULATION OF OVERALL KUWAITI "PLAN" AWAITS RETURN OF DEFENSE MINISTER. AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, HOWEVER, IT NOW SEEMS DEFINITE THAT SOME WEAPONRY, PROBABLY CONCENTRATED ON AIR DEFENSE, WILL BE COMING FROM USSR. ALSO, BRITISH SOURCES HERE INDICATE THAT CHIEFTAIN DEAL HAS FINALLY BEEN CONCLUDED. KUWAITIS REPORTEDLY WANT YUGOSLAV ASSISTANCE IN CONSTRUCTION OF THREE NEW NAVY BASES, AND HAVE BEEN TALKING WITH PAKISTANIS ABOUT LOAN OF ADDITIONAL NAVAL OFFICERS TO SET THEM UP AND ADMINISTER THEM AND WITH ITALIANS ABOUT PURCHASE OF HIGH-SPEED PATROL BOATS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT BANGLADESH ALSO TRYING TO SEND SOME PERSONNEL TO KUWAIT NAVY AND THAT EVEN THIS IS UNDER CONSIDERATION.

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3. LATEST WRINKLE, HOWEVER, IS POSSIBILITY THAT KUWAIT EXPLORING SETTING UP ITS OWN ARMS MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY (PRESUMABLY SMALL ARMS ONLY), WITH PAKISTANI, BRITISH OR ITALIAN ASSISTANCE. IN ADDITION THERE IS STATEMENT BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER DECEMBER 19 THAT JOINT LIBYAN-KUWAITI MILITARY INDUSTRIES MAY BE ESTABLISHED, PRESUMABLY IN LIBYA, CAPABLE OF AIRCRAFT PRODUCTION.

4. MUCH OF THIS WILL HOPEFULLY CLARIFY IN UPCOMING WEEKS. WHAT IS SIGNIFICANT IS APPARENT INCREASED TENDENCY ON PART OF KUWAITIS TO DIVERSIFY SOURCES OF MILITARY SUPPLY AND TECHNICAL/MANPOWER ASSISTANCE EVEN FURTHER. THIS IS ALL PART OF OVERALL KUWAITI PLAN TO DEVELOP A SIGNIFICANT MILITARY POSITION IN THE GULF AND TO DO SO IN A FASHIOH WHICH APPEARS TO HAVE BLESSING AND INVOLVEMENT OF BOTH MAJOR POWERS, AS WELL AS LEADING THIRD WORLD NATIONS.

5. COMMENT: IF,IN FACT, GOK INTENDS TO PURSUE COURSE OUTLINED ABOVE, THE END RESULT SHOULD BE COMMERCIAL ADVANTAGE TO MANY, BUT AN INEFFECTIVE AND STERILE LOCAL DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT.  
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